

INTERVIEWEE NAME: Louis Lemke

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BOLD PRINT is CCC enrollee Louis Lemke.

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DNR: I am interviewing Louis Lemke today and it's June 3, 2002, time is about 9:20 and we will start the interview. There is over some 50 questions and it will go fast. If you don't remember something just say hey that was 60 years ago I just don't remember that. I can't remember 6 days ago so it is ok if you to not remember 60 years ago. And whatever you want to talk about.

DNR: Now where was your hometown?

Casey.

DNR: And how old were you when you enrolled in the CCC's?

About 19.

DNR: And what did you do before you enrolled in the CCC camp?

Well I graduated from high school in Casey in 1937 and the first job I went out southwest of Atlantic worked for a fellow by the name of Henry Knob on the farm for just the summer of 1937 and in the winter of 1938 I went up in northwest Iowa and worked for another old couple on a farm for 15 dollars a month and my board and room. I had to work for 7 days a week even Sunday. And that following summer I worked for another fellow by Bode Iowa and I and another hired man we milked 20-22 cows every night and morning and that is when I began to see that I got only \$30.00 a month and I had to work on Sundays and I begin to think I could surely find something better than that. And that is when I heard and found out about the CCC camp so I got the particulars and found out if I could get in and so then that next summer in 39 I went to work in the CCC camp at Springbrook State Park north of Guthrie Center.

DNR: When was that in 39?

Yes, it was in 39 it was.

DNR: So you had to apply to get into the C's?

As I remember yes, you just couldn't just walk in and get in. Actually back in those days what the CCC camp was for that I remember was for the kids that didn't have jobs and find something for them to do.

DNR: Times were tough back then.

Oh my yes and there were droughts just before that a few years. And most of the kids that were in the CCC were city kids, they were town kids and there wasn't to many country boys.

DNR: Were you born and raised on a farm near Casey?

Yes, south of Casey. About two miles south of town and I had to walk 3 miles to high school each way, walk 6 miles to high school for 4 years. So when I got into the CCC camp I'm not sure if you want me to talk about that?

DNR: Oh yah. So you went to Springbrook and the camp was right there at Springbrook and do you know where you signed up, in Casey?

I really don't remember exactly. I might have had to go to Guthrie Center that was the county seat. Yah, I think so and what was so good about this whole thing, I had been working milking with some other man some 20 some cows ever night and morning and I was only making \$15.00 or \$20.00 dollars a week. And they told me that if I went into the CCC camp I could get \$30.00 a month and only have to work 5 days a week. So the first day I got up there at Springbrook State Park the head man, I can't remember his name that was in charge of us, there was quite a bunch of us in one group, he said any of you boys have any experience building fence. Well most of the city boys they new nothing about it and I said yes I know how to build fence. And he made me a foreman put me in charge of a crew and told us to build a fence all around Springbrook State Park. So that was our job for most of the 6 months but we got that done and then we worked on the bathhouse and that was the 2 jobs that I done.

DNR: How much did they pay you?

\$30.00 a month.

DNR: Did they give you \$5.00 and send some home?

Well, yah they gave you so much and the rest of it home. I don't remember whether they sent it directly or I sent it.

DNR: Did they send it the first of the month?

I think so the first of the month. We lived in barracks and slept on cots just like in the military.

DNR: How did you spend your money?

Well, I didn't have much. We would go to Guthrie Center on Saturday nights a bunch of us and try to have some fun and that was about it.

DNR: What did you do go to the movies drink a little soda pop.

What ever we could find. I am not sure if I should say this or not but back then you weren't suppose to have a car. If you had a car you couldn't get in. Well I had an old 32 Chevy and I hid it in the timber not far from Springbrook and we would walk that far a couple guys and me and then we would go to town, you see. And I had a deal with the guy that owned the land and that was how we got to go town.

DNR: Do you remember how you picked up your money? Did they line you up and then give you your money?

Yah, I think that was the way it was. And we had a mess hall where we ate we had to line up. I think but I would say for sure but I think we got paid in cash.

DNR: How about Sundays at camp, were you there on Sundays?

We didn't have to work on Saturdays & Sundays and we could relax in our barracks and do what ever we wanted to do. And they had strict orders you didn't dare bring any girls into the barracks cause you would go out into the park on Sundays and there would be a lot of people walking around in the park. That was one of the rules.

DNR: Was there some church services there on Sunday?

Yes, there were some church services on Sunday that you could.

DNR: Was there sports activities was there teams and stuff like that?

Oh, I will never forget that. They played ball.

DNR: Like softball?

Yah, maybe baseball too, I am not sure, they had activities and thing that you could do like that.

DNR: Did they have a recreation hall there?

Yah, I think so. As I remember they did.

DNR: Did you play any ball or anything like that?

No, I didn't and I guess the reason I didn't in high school was that I was interested in baseball. And I went out for baseball and I was the third baseman. My Dad and I had a lot of work to do on the farm with chores and the first night after school is when they would practice. And I was home almost an hour late after the first practice the first time (I went out for baseball and was a third baseman.) He asked me where have you been? See I had to walk 3 miles to school and 3 miles home. And I told him I went out for baseball. No more of that he said, I had to stay home and do my work. So that ended my baseball. For then I lost interest in it and I didn't pay any attention to it for the rest of my life. A lot of guys watch sports like crazy and the only interest was when the grand kids would go to the Dale and they were in little league baseball and my daughter played basketball in high school. If I knew someone like body that I would go.

DNR: Like having a personal interest.

Yes.

DNR: Do you remember the number of the camp there at Springbrook?

I don't remember that it had a number.

DNR: Did you keep any of that information or any of the memorabilia from back then?

No, not that I know of I don't think I have a thing that I know of.

DNR: OK. How about personal conflicts? Did you have any personal conflicts with anybody?

What do you mean by that?

DNR: Just fights, pushing matches disagreements, name calling.

No not really everybody seemed to mind their own business and do what they were suppose to do. I don't remember any incidents.

DNR: How would you think that they would have been taken care of if there were some disagreements?

Well they had a barracks foreman. If there were any problems they might have been in the barracks. He was real strict and he would have put a stop to them immediately he was a barracks foreman.

DNR: These questions are the same that I have asked these 20 plus other guys. And they pretty much all said that these guys behaved because they wanted to be there. They had to be there and they didn't want to get in any dispute that might get them tossed out of the camp and most of those guys behaved because they didn't want to get tossed out.

I think that is exactly right. We didn't have any problems that I recall for the 6 months that I was there. Some of those guys were in for 2 or 3 years. I left and went out to California and got a job.

DNR: Well there must have been a lot of that. Did you take any educational trade opportunities while you were there? It sounded like you were mostly on the fencing detail.

No I didn't take any educational things, there might have been some educational work but I didn't do it. That headman put me to work right away doing that fence and being the foreman of that crew which took most of the summer and I also helped build the bathhouse.

DNR: So the type of work you did was fencing?

Most of it. And then the bathhouse and that was it and then around the bathhouse, planting tree and landscape work.

DNR: Were you the foreman of the fence crew?

Yes I was the foreman of the fence crew and around the bathhouse and around there I was just one of the workers.

DNR: The bathhouse is still standing there.

Yah, we still go up there once in a while.

DNR: Well when you worked for the Department you went down to the old CCC camp and got your uniform.

Yah, we had a lot of meetings there.

DNR: It looks a little different today than it did then. What did you do when you were building the bathhouse, what was some of your duties?

Well, we laid sod on the landscaping all around the lake there and I think in planting trees is what I did mostly and some of the boys helped actually build the bath house, but I might have helped with some of that. But I mostly did a lot of the landscaping and stuff like that.

DNR: The lake was already there.

Yes, The lake was already there.

DNR: Did you get any training or special skills that you picked up, you already knew how to build fence cause you were a farm kid?

Well not really I really didn't. I knew most of the stuff before I went.

DNR: Well you knew how to work. You were a farm kid.

Well yah.

DNR: How did everybody get along at the worksite?

Well these boys wanted to do the best they could and learn as much as they could and I would tell them what to do and how much to do and they didn't argue and If I remember we didn't have any problems of any kind that I can recall. We were doing the job according to the way the headman wanted it.

DNR: So on your work assignments you know you had fence to build.

Yah, we had to do it clear around the park and we spent most of 6 months there. They didn't have a fence on a lot of it at the time.

DNR: Did you have a lot of specialized equipment you used on building fences or planting trees?

Well just the regular tools, posthole diggers, steel post driver, woven wire stretcher, barbwire stretcher and a spade.

DNR: There weren't any tree planters back in those days?

Yah, oh yah.

DNR: Just by hand. Do you remember any of your fellow workers?

No, I really don't. Well let's see. There were 3 boys from Cumberland Don, Wayne Erickson but I am not positive.

DNR: Did you keep in contact with them over the years?

Well one fall I went down and helped them stack hay. I was the hay stacker and they brought it in with lift and put the fork in it. And I met these guys and it seemed like they were in the CCC camp that we were working, but I am not positive about that. It was 3 brothers. I know 2 of them are dead now and maybe all of them. But it seemed like they were in there. I just don't remember.

DNR: That was about it.

Yah. I guess I just don't remember their name.

DNR: You talked once about the city kids and the country kids. There were some town and country kids there. How did they get along? There weren't any town kids versus the country kids.

I remember in the mess hall eating and the barrack and out in the field working, I don't remember too much of a problem.

DNR: Were there any African Americans, Native Americans or Hispanics or others?

No, I can't remember any of those.

DNR: Do you feel like you picked up any specific skill in the 6 months that you were there Louie?

Well not really I knew pretty much before what I did and so I guess I didn't that I can recall. I might have prepared me to stand in line at the mess and living in the barracks. I went into the service in World War II so that might have helped me a little. I got use to that in there so it wasn't so bad.

DNR: Any injuries at work, did you ever get hurt?

No not that I can remember.

DNR: If somebody got hurt how did they take care of them?

Well there was a place in the barracks that had a medical area where they took care of you if you got sick or if you got hurt. So I think they had able bodied people there to take care of them.

DNR: Was there any disease?

Not that I recall

DNR: How about rodents and insects?

Well, I think we had plenty of them, mice and flies and stuff.

DNR: Did you ever do any work outside of the camp or in the community or around Guthrie Center that was not a part of the CCC's?

Do you mean afterwards?

DNR: No I mean during.

No not that I remember

DNR: Did you have any contacts outside of the CCC camp? Did you know anybody in town Guthrie?

Well yes. I was born and raised south of Casey and I knew a few business people in Guthrie Center that had businesses.

DNR: How far is Casey from Guthrie?

About 12 miles north of Casey on 25 and then Springbrook was on north of that yet.

DNR: Was there any fellowship type organizations in the camp at all that you can recall, like Masons, Elks or Odd fellows?

Well not that I remember. There could have been but I didn't attend any.

DNR: Tell me about any contacts with females that you had during your stay at the camp did you have any female friends?

Well, I didn't tell this one story, I told you about the rule that you couldn't have any body in the barracks. Well I was out in the park walking around in the park one Sunday afternoon and I met this girl and ah she got interested in where I lived and wanted to see what the barracks looked like inside. So I said I will show you. I thought it would only be for a few minutes and just show her the barracks where I slept and where we lived and she was sitting on my edge of my bunk and then the barracks master came in and that never happened again. There was nothing inappropriate but any way that was the only contact beside meeting girls in the park on a Sunday. I don't remember her name and that is about the only thing that happened to me.

DNR: Were there any problems between the young men in the community; were there any disagreements with the boys that lived in Guthrie with the boys that lived in the camp?

No, I had a lot of those kinds of things when I went in the service in WW II when I went into training. But in the CCC camp we were quite a bit younger and as you said the boys were quite a bit younger and the boys wanted to keep their jobs. There might have been a little friction.

DNR: A lot of the guys that I talked to said everything went pretty well.

That is how I remember it anyway.

DNR: How do you think the community thought about the CCC camp?

Well, I think they thought it was a good thing. A lot of these boys were just on the streets and it gave them some work plus they did some good things for the parks for the people for the rest of their life. So I think the communities were in favor of these camps.

DNR: Do you have any memorable experiences of the camp other than the girl coming in the barracks?

We played ball like I said those were the fun things. Outside of that I don't think I can remember much.

DNR: Did you have anything happen to you there that you thought was really strange or odd.

Not that I know of. I can't recall anything. Most of the crew I had there might have been a few of them that didn't like me telling them what to do, but it was really nothing that amounted to anything.

DNR: What do you think your biggest accomplishment was at the camp?

Well I think the experience of living there was a good thing, you got to work with a bunch of people and you got adjusted. And little did I know then that I would be going into the Navy in WW II and living in a barracks and the mess halls. It was sure an asset when I lived in there.

DNR: So those things kind of changed your life and helped you mature.

The reason I didn't stay in the CCC there was a couple of other fellows and we were only getting \$30.00 a month and we decided that they we could surely find some work somewhere else. So we went out to San Diego, California, the 3 of us went to the YMCA and lived there. We got our board and room and we did little odd jobs. We decided that we could go to sheet metal school for free and then if we could get jobs we could go to aircraft school. So we went to this sheet metal course and lived at the WMCA and lived at the WMCA and at that time married people that were

married they worked the day. If you weren't married and worked in the factory you worked the night shift and back then it was 10 hours. It was 7 o'clock at night until 5 am in the morning. I hated night work. Well anyway we got through this sheet metal course and we still couldn't get a job. Finally this head guy on the WMCA wrote a big letter to a foreman at Consolidated Aircraft. And he came down one morning and he said, "I will tell you what I am going to do I want you boys to take this letter up to Consolidated Aircraft Corp. and give it to the foreman and maybe you can go to work. He asked us a bunch of questions first about what kind of wrench we would use for this sort of thing and all kinds of questions. And I and these other 2 boys from Casey we went in there and I remember there was some steps that we had to go up too in the factory and he asked you a few questions and then he said I am going to put you boys to work. We got 50 cents an hour from working 7 at night until 5 am in the morning and we worked a couple of years. And finally we couldn't sleep in the daytime, we put things on our eyes and then we decided we are finally going to quit. And one of the other guys quit earlier and one told his folks he was coming home and so that night we went up to the foreman and he asked why are you quitting? Well we said we know we couldn't get on days and there was no use in asking and we just couldn't stand it anymore that we couldn't sleep. And this guy he kind of puzzled and he said I know what I am going to do, I am going to put you on days starting tomorrow morning come in and work at 7 o'clock.

The other boys already decided he was going to quit cause he was a Momma's boy so he went and I stayed and worked days until I went into the service in WW II and then I got married in 1942, the day before Pearl Harbor Dec 6, 1942 and that was a year later.

DNR: So after you left the C's you went out to San Diego, California and your went to a sheet metal school and then worked at a sheet metal factory. How long were you there? 4 years. And then my wife came out from Greenfield and we got married in Ocean Beach, California. My brother in law and sister lived out there and they were the best man and bridesmaid. We spent our first night in Hollywood in a motel.

DNR: Well that's the place to spend your first night of marriage, Hollywood. So you stayed working there in the aircraft factory?

Well here is what happened. I became a skilled worker and my brother in law will never let me forget it that he was my best man. And he is still alive he is some 90 years old and my sister died several years ago. I told him if I could work for 50 cents an hour for the rest of my life I said man I would be happy.

DNR: What were you working on?

We were working on B24 Bombers and I worked first on sheet metal and I would be working under the wings and I filing out places and I would get stuff in my eyes. So I decided I was going to invent a tool to bend these stringers instead of filing them out so I did and made one and took it before the foreman and to make a long story short they got a patent on that and I got some money for making that and from then on I used a stringer bender and you bent these instead of filing them so they would work. So anyway I became an inspector and was called a skilled employee and my job was that after the plane was all done I had a certain part of the plane that I had to inspect to see if it was ok, and everything that was wrong. I wrote up a sheet of

items that needed fixed and to be done and that was my job. Well by that time I was 20 and bought a house. This was after the war started. They said anybody that is over 25 years old wouldn't have to go, they needed them worse to build planes than for them to go into the service. So we bought a house out in National City and had a little girl that was about 6 weeks old and one day they came down and they said that everybody that is under 25 has to go to the service if you want to or not.

DNR: How old were you then?

Well I got married when I was 22 and lets see, no I was over 25 I was 26 at that time. No I was 24 because I got married in 42 and I was 22 and it was only 2 years later. Yah I was 24 that is why I had to go. I got married in 42 and I was 22 and 2 years later I was 24 so I decided I wanted to go after they came down and said anyone that is under 25 has to go regardless of their job. So I decided I wanted to go from Greenfield by Adair County draft board instead of out in San Diego and had my papers transferred to Adair County and that took about 3 weeks longer. And my wife and I packed up and we sold the house and the little girl like I said was just a few months old and we went to Greenfield and my wife lived in Greenfield with her folks.

DNR: You enlisted?

No I was drafted. The funny thing it was when we went to go in they had a line and they were taking a whole bunch of us in to go and there would be an Army guy here and a Navy guy there and they would say which do you want? And of course I didn't want the Army, I wanted the Navy and they were taking about every other one. I remember the guy in front of me he said Navy well the Army needs you so he took him. He comes to me and I said Navy, and he said ok. So after we got done they put all the people that were Navy in this room and all the Army in another room and I could see that big old Marine. He came in and said I guess you boys know they Navy is part of the Marines and we need 5 volunteers to go to the Marines. And I was getting littler and littler all the time. The last place I wanted to be was in the Marines. He asked me if I was married and had any kids and I told him I was and had a little girl, that was the only think that saved me or I would have been a Marine. So I went in the Navy.

DNR: How long were you in there?

I went into the Navy out in California and sent me to sheet medal school no that's wrong. I went to cargo handling school.

DNR: How did they get you out there, by train?

I think maybe it was. I went to Cargo Handling School for a month or 6 weeks and that is when I started to run into a little trouble by for some reason we took gun training too. They made me a sea man and put me in charge of gun crew, 5 or 6 people and some of these people were 3rd class petty officers, and they didn't like it.

Anyway part of the job when we were shooting the guns, I would say ok boys lets clean up the guns and this and that and this one guy and he didn't want to take any orders from a seaman. So one day we had our whites on and he had a handful of grease he just wiped his hand on me and I just took it and wiped it back on me. He said we were already assigned to a ship APA 1929 Marvin H McIntyre as soon as we got through with cargo school we heading to get out on the ship and this whole bunch that was in this cargo handling school was going to be on that ship. He said

when I get you on that ship you are going to be doing mess cook duty, midnight watches he said you'd wish you were never born. I didn't say a word.

Anyway in high school I took typing and shorthand and I could type pretty good and I found out whom the chief wheelman was going to be aboard on that ship. And he was waiting to get on that ship too. And I went and seen him and I asked him if he was going to need any Yeoman strikers when we get aboard. And he said yah can you type? And he gave me a typing test right there and your just fine. He said just don't say a word to know one. They were going to assign after we got on ship.

The first thing you do when you get on the ship you come right up to my office and we will get you situated. And I didn't say a word and the day came that we got on the ship and I went up there and he told me he had two openings, one is the Chaplin Yeoman and the other is a First Lieutenant Yeoman. And I chose the First Lieutenant Yeoman and the first week everything was in kayos everyone was running every which way and I was suppose to be a deck hand, because the Kernel had me. And one day I saw this kid that was going to put me on mess cook and all kinds of things and he said, "Where have you been?" Why I said you don't think I am stupid enough to be a deck hand, I said I am in the ships office as a Yeoman. Funny part was he didn't say much but I fixed him but good, I was in charge of all of the liberty cards and we had a rule on ship if you lost your liberty card you were automatically restricted to the ship for 30 days. And I made sure his was lost. And I would say I didn't lose my card. And then from then on I had no problem with nobody.

DNR: How long were you in the Navy?

I went into the Navy in June of 1944 and got out in April 1946. Just lacked a month of two years.

DNR: Where did you go?

Well we went aboard the ship APA it was a transport ship APA 149 Marion H. McIntyre. And we were in the southwest Pacific for a year and we were in an invasion of Okinawa. We took 2000 of the 5th Marines over there in that invasion and I was a Yeoman and during that time we were on the deck and we all had 20 millimeter guns, because the Japanese was coming and trying to bomb us. Were setting there and they dropped the bombs close enough to the ship and it would splash water up into my face that is how close they came to hitting us. But anyway that was my job and I got to be 3rd class Petty Officer and this Lieutenant he was the 10th Commander was in the office where I was at. And he became the executive officer and he wanted me to stay in the Navy. But I didn't want to so anyway I got out and it was by quirk of fate that I stayed in the reserves, they asked you if you wanted to stay in the reserves and hardly anybody did. So I didn't either and that is when I got out of the service and went on my Dads farm. He wanted to quit; south of Casey in 1947 there we moved and got out in the fall of 46. Then we went out in the farm. I don't know where you were in the year of 47 but it was a terrible year and it was wet and we lived on the farm. On Memorial Day it snowed 4 inches.

DNR: In 47.

Yes in 47 it was a terrible year so I called my wife and I said there has got to be a better way to make a living than this. And that is when I saw an ad in the Sunday

paper about they was taking applications for Highway Patrolmen. So I took the exam or sent in the application. They picked I think 30 guys they picked to go to school at Camp Dodge for a month. They told us when we went out that only half of you were going to get a job and were going to pick just the top half. So they picked me as one of the top half and man I worked like a beaver. It was just about like being in the CCC camp, I wanted to get something better than I had. And so I even spent, they had a curfew just like in the service and there was a certain time you had to be in your bunk. I would then go into the restroom and study.

Anyway to make a long story short we were there for 6 weeks, I guess it was. And when it was the last day we all got to know each other real well, we lived in bunks just like CCC camp at Camp Dodge and we played baseball there in our spare time too. So anyway the head man came out from the Highway Patrol the captains and so on and they said we aren't going to tell any of you people who made it or didn't, half of you did. But your all friends and I don't want any hard feelings, so all of you go home and tomorrow morning by 9 o'clock if you made it you will get a telegram telling you where to go. If you don't make it you won't hear from us. So this little town of Casey there was three of us that took the exam, the one guy lived a farm east of Casey he didn't even make the school. Max Bailey was one that lived in town and I lived out in the country. So we too made it. So back then they had the old Rock Island Railroad went through Casey and they had a depot there. And we lived, I walked 3 miles just into town on a mud road and that year it just rained everyday. So the next morning at 9:00 Max called me out on the farm from Casey. He said did you get a telegram and I said nope. I said did you and he said yup and they were going to send him up to Northeast Iowa. I said I guess I didn't make it. And he said he was sorry to hear that. And he hung up and right away again the phone rang again, here it was this depot agent from Casey calling me.

He said I got a telegram for you. And I said it is raining and I can't get to town can you just open it for me and read it to me? He said yah. So he opened it and read it and it said I made it and I was suppose to report to Dennison, Iowa so that is my story and I was there for two years on patrol. Then I went to the Conservation Commission to become a Conservation Officer.

DNR: You retired when?

In June of 1980 that was about the end of my story.

DNR: Whenever they sent you to Dennison did you have any more law enforcement training?

Well what they did the first month you didn't get a car and you had your 38 pistol. And no car and you rode with another patrolman for a month, in training before you had your own car to drive. And I don't know if you ever heard of John Mante or not but he was one of the original patrolman and he was a big man. And that is whom they assigned me to work with. And the funny thing that was during his tenure before I went to work he was kidnapped and they almost killed him. There was a bank robbery and funny thing was that he stopped the car for running through a stop sign and then be known to him at that time it was the bank robber, and he wasn't expecting this and before he could hardly get out of his car the guy came right up to him at the door and had a gun right on him took him and put him in the back seat of his car and another guy had a woman with him and she was in

the back seat, put him in there and put his own handcuffs on him and put him in the back seat. She held a gun hammer at his back temple and said if you cause any trouble I will kill you. And the other guy got in his patrol car and they drove several miles out in the country, this was in the summer and the corn was 6 feet high and they parked this patrol car out in the cornfield and he got in with the woman and him and they drove until they came to one of these old abandoned country school houses a one room. They put him in there and handcuffed him to the grates of the stove and took off and left. Well he was pretty big and he jerked the grates loose and walked to the nearest farm house and got help and they found the patrol car later in the corn field several miles from there and if you ever quit from the Highway Patrol it is about like the Conservation Commission and you couldn't get back on.

But they made an exception with John do to the circumstances he quit but they let him come back on. And it wasn't too much longer that I went to work and worked with him on the night shift. I think it was the third night and I will never forget this like I said I didn't have a car. I was still training for 30 days. They carried sawed off shotguns right under below the seat. We are working up around Glidden and Carroll between Dennison. A call came that said there was a man that just killed three people out in the country south of Glidden and to report there immediately and he calling he wants to call the mother and the daughter.

I will never forget that I was sitting in the car and John had a cap on with the bill instead of what they were know and it was already right after the other experience that he had went through. He pulled his cap down and he said Louie grab that sawed off shotgun and get ready. And this was my third night and I am a thinking what are we doing. So we beat it down there we drove out in the country 2 or 3 miles until we came to this lonely old farmhouse with a real long lane. You could hear this woman screaming in the house. He is calling for me to come out so he can shoot to kill me. So she said he just called a little while ago. And I remember me walking up these old wooden steps from the house to a shed about to the length of here to the wall. And the first thing I saw was a little boy about 10 or 12 years old laying and he was shot but he wasn't dead. And then I saw a man a little further and I took his pulse and he was dead. We went in the house and there was a girl and the phone was hanging from the receiver and she was lying on the ground dead and she was calling for help when he shot her. And the funny thing that was that the man that did this he worked for this farm couple for a couple of years out in the farm and this girl got to be about 15 or 16 years old and he was molesting her I guess and the farmer fired him. And he didn't think too much about it. So they always went to Glidden on Saturday night roller-skating and this night they were sitting waiting in their car waiting for the kids to get done roller-skating to go home. Well this fellow lived on that farm and he knew where everything was on that farm. So he walked up to the farmer sitting in the car and he said lets forget our troubles and you give me my job back. And the farmer said I can forget about the troubles but your not getting your job back. And this man said if that is the way you feel about it I am just going to carry out my plans. Of course the farmer didn't know what he was talking about but he left and hid his car in a cornfield about a mile away and walked in and was hiding behind this building and he knew exactly what happened every Saturday night and where they parked their car and how they walked up this walkway into

the house and he is standing about twice the distance from here to the window with his 22 rifle and as soon as they started getting out of their car and walked up the walkway he knew what was going to happen he started shooting.

Well in the meantime this farmer rehired his brother and he was sleeping in a bunk or a cot under a tree because it was in the summer time. And he heard this shooting and when he starting to come towards there he killed him. And ah this girl had taken a friend home with her that Saturday night and when all of this shooting started the woman and this friend of the girl ran upstairs and locked the door and the girl the daughter was the one that made the phone call and he come rushing in there after he shot the little boy and the other two men, the Dad and the brother and shot her and they were screaming and he couldn't get in because they had the door locked and they were upstairs. There was a windmill with a platform that sat quite a little distance from the house and what he was doing was he went out there and he crawled up on this platform of this windmill and he was shooting into this window because he wanted to kill them all. Well they were screaming you know because they knew he was shooting at them. Well that was about the time just before that and we saw all of this commotion that I just told you about. And we called an ambulance and hauled the dead bodies away and the little boy was still alive. So then by then the sheriff got there with a whole bunch of law enforcement people and here it is in the middle of the night it was about 2 or 3 o'clock in the morning.

We knew this guy was right around and he was calling for them to come out so he could kill the mother and the other girl. We knew he was there but we didn't know where he was. So the Sergeant who was Al Sterling the Sergeant at the time, he was kind of a gruff old guy. Anyway he said and this is the funny part, he said it is dangerous for us to stay here and he is lurking around here and he is going to kill anybody that gets in his way. And we have done all we can do and have taken the bodies away and the boy that was injured and he said to John and he said you two stay here and guard this place because he will probably come back and set fire to all of these buildings. He said they were all going to leave and come back at daylight. And here we are John my third night and this guy and me have already killed three people and we know he was hiding in the barn or what have you. So John we pulled the car up and John said to me, I had the shoot gun and he had his 38, and he said we opened the passenger side of the door and sat on the ground he was facing one way and I was facing the other way and we could see all around and there we sat and he said know if you see anything will have to take care of it. And we set there and it was a moonlight night and there were a few clouds and we would see shadows when the clouds moved around. I thought I was seen somebody running. That was a weird night and the funny thing that was we never saw a soul. And the men came back at daylight. So we went into the house and started looking around and I saw where a bullet had hit the floor in a board and I thought that was strange and I could see a hole that came right threw the window and went right down and came through the house. So I looked through there and it took my gaze to that platform on the windmill and we walked out there and here was this guy was laying on the ground dead and he had shot himself up on top of that platform and he was laying dead and his rifle was laying there in two parts. He must have killed himself

when he saw us coming because he knew the jig was up. But we didn't know that and that is the story.

DNR: And he killed the brother the daughter the Dad and injured the son.

And I had some stories from the Conservation Commission Officer where I almost got killed but that is another story.

DNR: Oh my, so you went into that in what 49 as a game warden.

Yes 49, I went in and stayed until I retired.

DNR: I missed some questions that I better get back too. You stayed at Springbrook the whole time.

Yes.

DNR: Do you remember the dates that you went in there?

Well I went in the spring and all summer and went in April and got out in October in 1939. I am sure it was 39 and it could have been 38. But I don't think so.

DNR: You graduated from high school in 47. The first day in camp you sign up there, we are just having all kinds of good times telling stories and things (Speaking with someone else in the room). Doing some painted up at a house where we could live my wife and I and she got this lamp out that is on a pedestal and she took the cover off it would be more bright so we could see where we missed and I stuck my arm on the light bulb yesterday and burnt my arm and man that hurts.

I bet it hurts.

DNR: You bet it even blistered right up. So you signed up at Guthrie and went out to camp. And they checked you in and what did they give you? Shaving stuff, towel and blankets?

Yes I believe they did but I am not positive.

DNR: A lot of the guys said the first year there they gave out WW I clothing.

I am not positive or sure what kind of clothing I got for sure.

DNR: Did you take any with you any personal items?

Oh, maybe just my shaving items and stuff and what have you.

DNR: Did they tell you not to bring any thing else not with you, other than your car?

Yeah. (Laughter) I didn't tell them that.

DNR: How did you get assigned to where you were staying?

That is a good question maybe because I lived right there. I really don't know a lot of the boys that were there were from Des Moines you know.

DNR: They just told you to go to a certain barracks.

Yah, I was assigned to a certain barracks at Springbrook State Park.

DNR: They weren't tents.

No they were barracks and I slept on a cot.

DNR: How about the cots and blankets were they all government issued?

Yah.

DNR: Remember any of the people in your barracks?

Do you remember Wayne Erickson was he in the CCC? (Asking his wife I have no idea.) It seems like I met those men there Wayne and Don and Tunie.

DNR: Where were they from?

They were from Cumberland?

DNR: Where was Cumberland?

Well it is south of Atlantic and to the east a little bit.

DNR: Well most of the guys in the camp were they from Iowa?

Yes, I think all of them.

DNR: Everybody got along ok?

Yep.

DNR: How about the food?

Well I never complained about it, it was good enough for me.

DNR: Did they do anything special or who did the cooking?

Well they had regular cooks just like in the service you know they had cooks and mess cooks and a few that just did the foods.

DNR: How about any holidays? Were you there on any holidays where they did any special holiday meals?

Well I could have been yah I think they did on Thanksgiving they had turkey and a special meal.

DNR: Two of the fellows that I have interviewed had a menu for Xmas and the menu was just printed up on paper about that big and it had a list of all the C members and they had a menu there everything that they were going to have and one of them at the bottom said cigars. And the other one had cigarettes so they provided the smoking material along with dinner.

I never did smoke, but a lot of the guys did.

DNR: Well that CCC experience was good.

Well I am sure it helped me in more ways than one. Especially when I went into the WW II and the Navy and also being around.

DNR: How many guys were out there?

You mean at Springbrook and at camp.

DNR: Yah, at the camp.

Oh my there was quite a bunch when they went to eat in the mess hall it was full and I really wouldn't want to guess because there was quite a few.

DNR: Do you have any idea how many were in the barracks that you were in?

Well probably about 30 maybe. Maybe 20 they were long barracks. And it was full.

DNR: Heating stove in it somewhere? Air conditioning in there?

Oh, no.

DNR: Air conditioning when you opened the door, right?

I talked to a guy the other day Feb 22, who lives out at Pleasantville and his name Sid Cox and he was out of Springbrook.

Oh really, there were a lot of people out there that I wouldn't know. Where are most of these from that you have interviewed?

DNR: The first two that I did were in Fort Dodge, Marshalltown, Williamsburg, Williams and this guy that I talked to over at Williamsburg Iowa, when I got to that question of were you ever injured?

Interview is concluded at about 10:30 and this was with Louis Lemke.